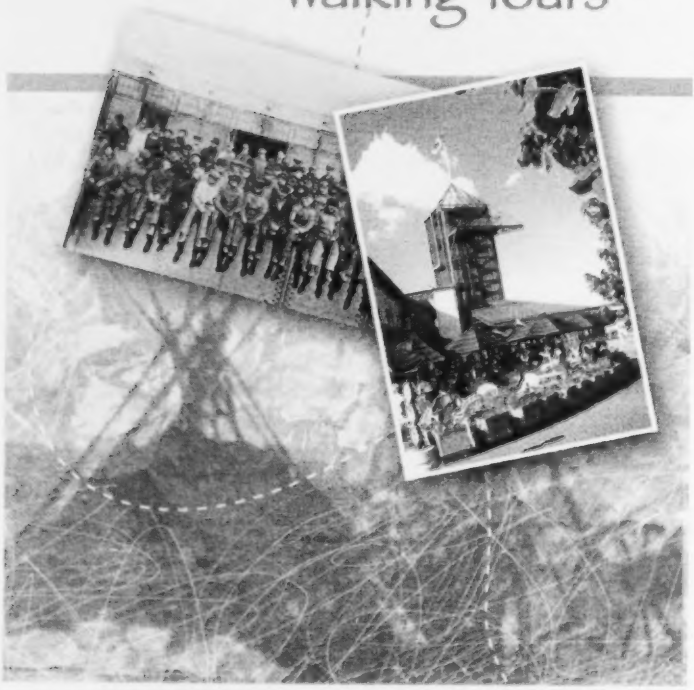
The Forks

Walking Tours



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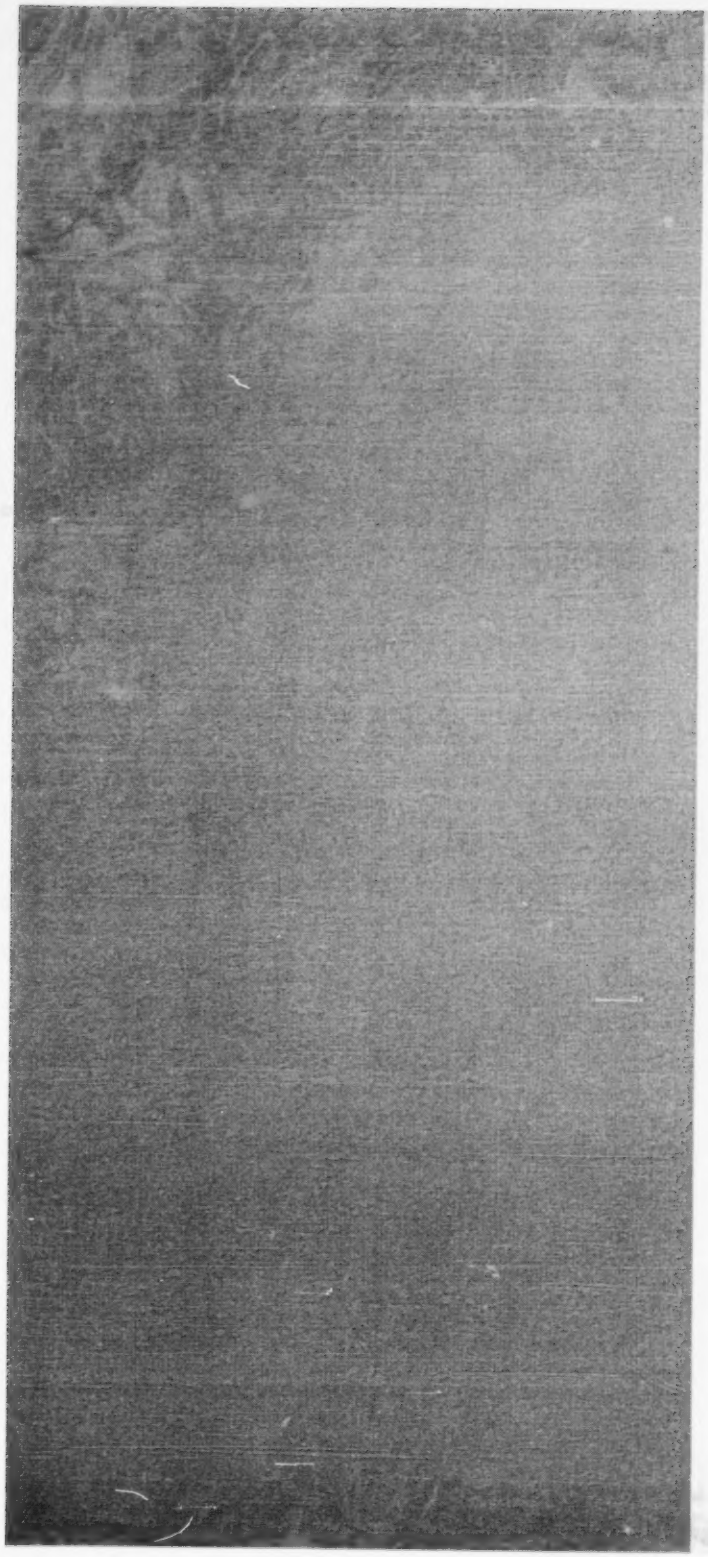


The Forks Walking Tours

A word about using this guide...

MINI-TOURS

This publication is comprised of six mini-tours, arranged around the important historical and developmental stories of The Forks. Each of these tours includes:

- a brief **introduction**
- **highlights** of the era's history
- a **map** identifying interpretive plaques, images and locations throughout The Forks that give you detailed information on each of these stories

The key stories are arranged so you can travel back in time. Start by familiarizing yourself with the present and then move back to the past.

GET YOUR BEARINGS

If you can see the green dome of the railway station and the green roof of the Hotel Fort Garry, you are looking west. If you are looking at the red canopy of the Scotiabank Stage, you are pointed north. If you see the wide Red River, you are looking east and by looking south you see the smaller Assiniboine River.

Introduction

Welcome Newcomer!

You are standing on land that has, for thousands of years, been a place of great activity. It has seen the comings and goings – of massive glacial sheets of ice – of expansive lakes teeming with wildlife of every description – of new lands filled with new species of plants and animals – of newly-arrived humans, Aboriginal bands, fur traders, settlers – of new technologies – steam engines and iron rails, wharves, bridges, factories and automobiles. And today this land has witnessed a rebirth and a renewed public life.

Take Your Place!

If you are a first time visitor, take this opportunity to let your eyes and imagination wander!

Imagine your place among the hundreds of immigrant railway workers toiling in one of the industrial buildings in the yards. You hear dozens of foreign languages, strange to your ear, as you repair the massive steam engines brought into the yards and hauled into the roundhouse. Or maybe you work in the stables, caring for the hundreds of horses used in pulling the wagons that transport the boxcars full of goods to the warehouse district nearby.

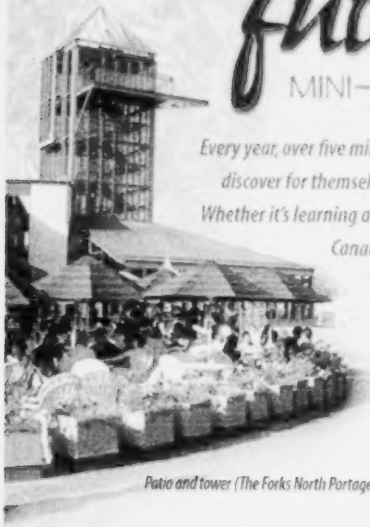
Let your imagination wander further and hear the sound of the steamboat whistle; see the constant movement of people and cargo at the banks of the river as the steamboats arrive. Watch with amazement as these large ships, often towing a barge to increase their freighting capacity, are unloaded. No longer must you order your household items and wait a year for them to arrive from England. Now you can order your supplies from St. Paul, Minnesota and have your order in only a few weeks. The steamboat's cargo includes necessities such as sugar and tea, seed for planting, wagon wheels, barrels of food, machinery and parts, medicine and even milled lumber for building. But you also see more luxurious items – bolts of fine cloth, fancy dresses and handsome suits, the latest farm equipment or exotic spices from around the world. No less extraordinary was the sight of the passengers, over 200 on the larger steamboats. They could be businessmen from the United States, coming to the Red River Settlement to trade or open an office, relatives visiting from Eastern Canada, or newly arrived immigrant families.

Wherever your imagination takes you, by coming to The Forks you are both repeating and contributing to a new chapter in its history.

If you are returning, you may well encounter something new and hopefully look at the familiar in a new light...

now and into the future...

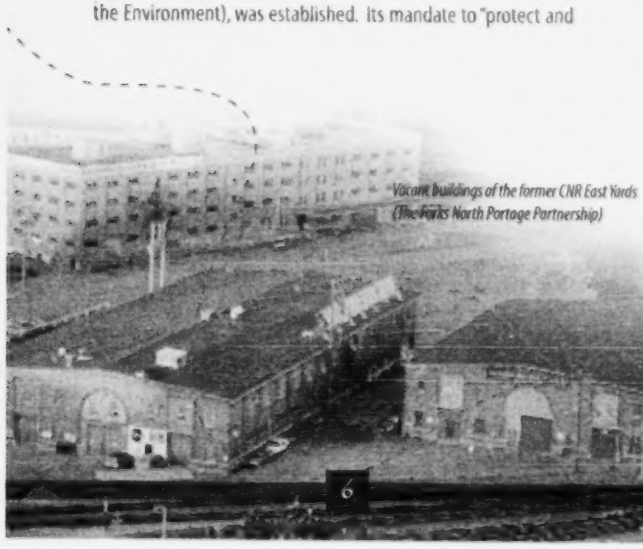
MINI-TOUR ONE



Patio and tower (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

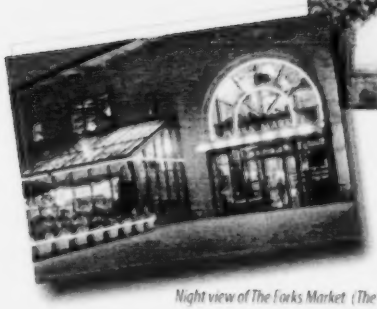
Every year, over five million visitors come to The Forks, to discover for themselves this popular "meeting place." Whether it's learning about the rich heritage of Western Canada and the integral role The Forks played, shopping in the dozens of unique retail stores, eating at one of the many restaurants, or enjoying a walk or boat along the river, there is something for everyone here.

The Canadian National Railway dominated activity at The Forks in the 20th century. As transportation technologies changed and rail operations at The Forks became redundant, an opportunity to restore the site to the public realm emerged. A $3.5 million agreement in 1986 to create a national historic site, owned and operated by Parks Canada (an Agency in the Department of the Environment), was established. Its mandate to "protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations" was embodied in the new national historic site. Through the tri-level Winnipeg Core Area Initiative, funding became available to redevelop the site for public use.

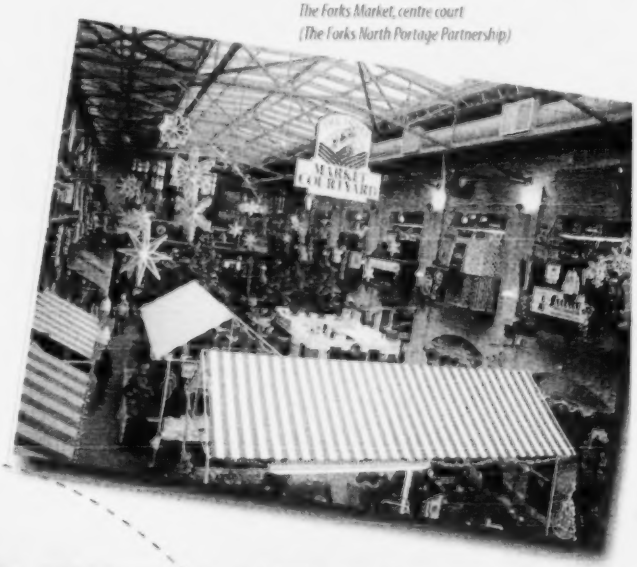


Vacant buildings of the former CNR East Yards (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

Esplanade Riel, connecting The Forks with St. Boniface (The Forks North Portage Partnership)



Night view of The Forks Market (The Forks North Portage Partnership)



The Forks Market, centre court (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

After a series of feasibility studies and public consultations, The Forks Renewal Corporation was established in 1987 by the Governments of Canada, Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg with a mandate to create "...a special and distinct, all-season gathering and recreational place at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, through a mixed-use approach including recreational, historical and cultural, residential, and institutional and supportive commercial uses." Since that time The Forks has established itself as the spiritual heart of the city, with the public taking immense pride and a sense of ownership of the site. Redevelopment however has not been without controversy, as conflicting visions for the site are debated in the public arena. Achieving the right balance is a difficult task. One thing is certain: the public debate will always be present, providing a constant reminder to the stewards of The Forks of the high regard the public has for the site.

Dancing to a live band under the canopy (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

Snow sculpture (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

Aboriginal hoop dancer during Earth Day celebrations (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

Highlights of the Modern Era

1972: 160 kilometres of the Red River from the international border to Lower Fort Garry was identified as a principal historic route in Western Canada, along with a federal funding arrangement to "commemorate historic communication routes in Canada by preserving and adapting them for recreational use."

1986: The tri-level East Yard Task Force was established, followed by The Forks Renewal Corporation the following year, to oversee the redevelopment of the site adjacent to the Parks Canada land. A five-year budget of approximately $20 million was provided.

1988: An agreement which saw the Canadian National Railway turn over most of its land at The Forks in exchange for cash and an office building in Vancouver, B.C. paved the way for the redevelopment of railway yards at The Forks.

1989: The Forks National Historic Site of Canada was officially opened in the summer boasting a Riverwalk, amphitheatre, boat dock, heritage adventure playground and interpretive area.

1989: The Forks as we know it today began taking shape with the opening of The Forks Market, created by the joining of two brick cartage company stable buildings originally built in 1910 and 1911, supplying ample and unique space for shops, restaurants and offices.

1990: National Sculpture Competition for the Path of Time was awarded to Manitoba artist Marcel Gosselin.

1990: The opening of the skating oval and canopy.

1991: Construction of the marina is completed, with its well-anchored harbour, layered landscaping and lighthouse, becoming one of The Forks' most popular public spaces.

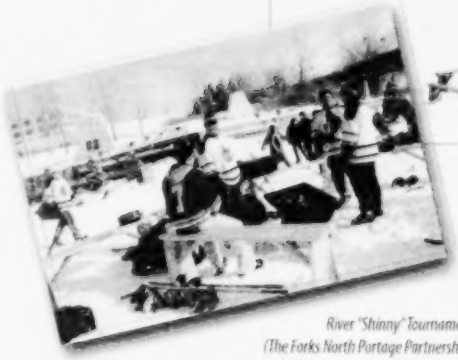
1993: Oodena Celebration Circle opened as the spiritual centre of The Forks. The name Oodena is taken from the Ojibwe language meaning "heart of the community." This oval and concave site, completed in cobblestone, recalls the ancient ties between early humans and their environment. Surrounding the three-metre deep bowl, which is used as seating for live theatre, are eight sculptural steel armatures that act as guideposts for celestial orientation.

1993: The Johnston Terminal, a massive former cold storage warehouse (built between 1928 and 1930) was transformed into a retail/office complex including the Explore Manitoba Centre.

1994: The Manitoba Children's Museum opened, originally built in 1889 as the B&B Building (originally the Brakes and Boiler Building and then renamed the Bridges and Building Department), now known as the Kinsmen Building.

The Forks Marina (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

Winter river trail (The Forks North Portage Partnership)



River "Shinny" Tournament (The Forks North Portage Partnership)

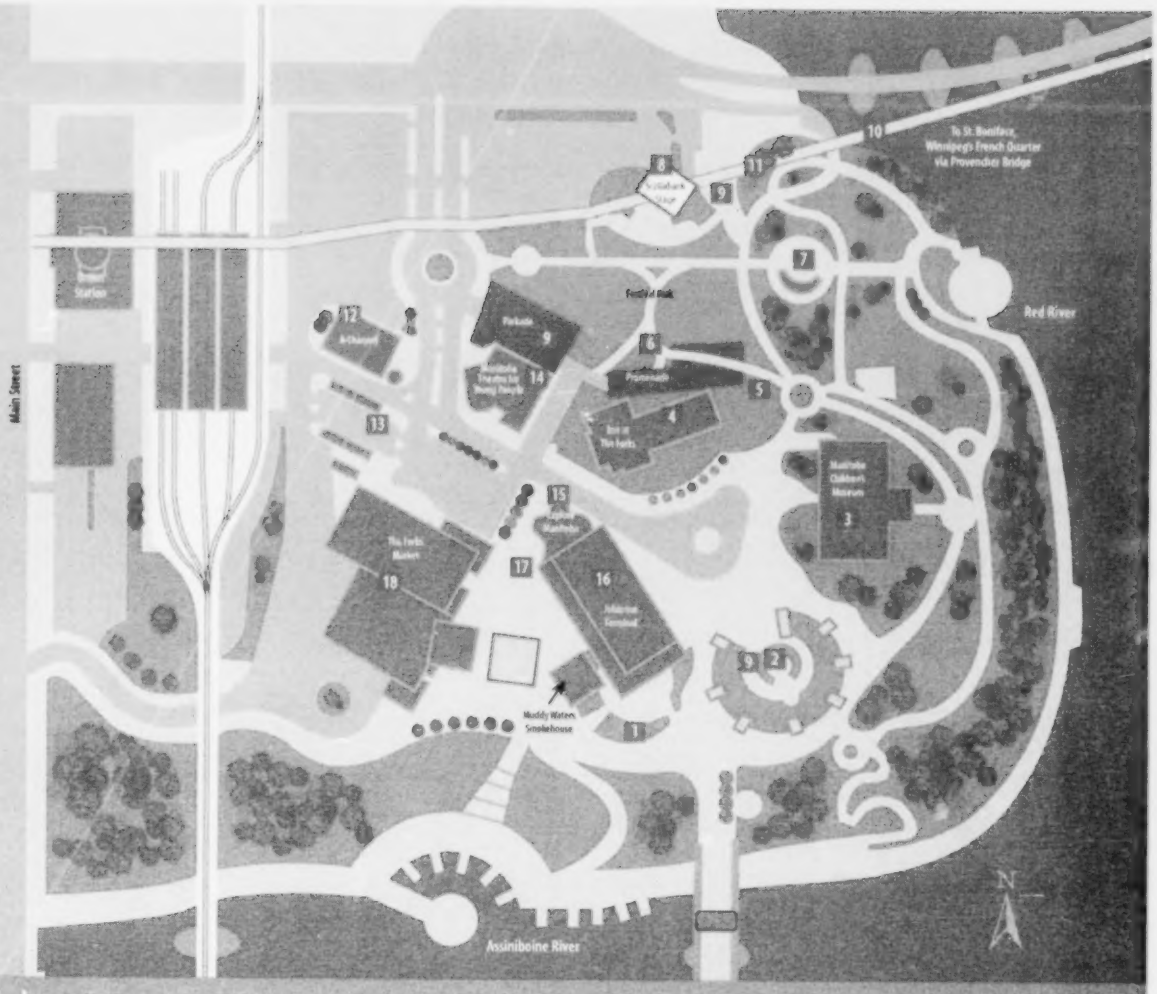
1995: The Forks North Portage Partnership is created with a mandate "to act as a catalyst, encouraging activities for people in the downtown area through public and private partnerships, revitalization strategies; and to work to ensure financial self-sufficiency." At The Forks, the Partnership is involved in creating "...a special and distinct, all-season gathering and recreational place at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, through a mixed-use approach including recreational, historical and cultural, residential, and institutional and supportive commercial uses."

2000: As an Aboriginal millennium tribute, 21 gambling sticks created by artist Robert Houle were installed along the Riverwalk.

2004: The historic ties between the City of Winnipeg and the City of St. Boniface were recreated through the completion of the Broadway Promenade pathway and Esplanade Riel pedestrian bridge. Once again, the two major centres are connected as they were prior to the location of the railway yards and the 1911 construction of the Union Station on Main Street that severed the historic Broadway-Provencher Boulevard connection via the former Broadway Bridge.

now and into the future

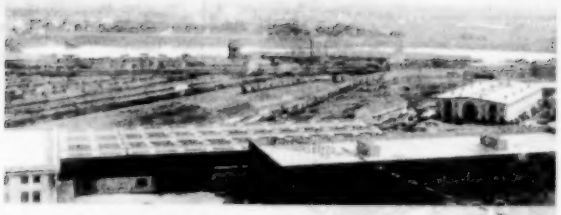
MINI-TOUR ONE



Sites at The Forks

1. **Tall Grass Prairie Gardens,** two areas highlighting the diverse flora of the now endangered grassland that once covered most of Southern Manitoba.
2. **Oodena Celebration Circle**
3. **Manitoba Children's Museum**
4. **Inn at the Forks**
5. **Cauldron** from Winnipeg's 1999 Pan Am Games.
6. **Environment Canada Weather Station**
7. **Path of Time sculpture**
8. **Scotiabank Stage,** site of many outdoor concerts and events.
9. * **Cobblestone,** made of Boissevain, Manitoba sandstone, laid as paving stones by the railways and now reclaimed and used as building and ornamental material throughout the site (*Note the 3 locations on the map and that the Parkade is above ground).
10. **Provencher Bridge, Esplanade Riel.** The magnificent vehicular and pedestrian crossings of the Red River, connecting Winnipeg with St. Boniface.
11. **Broadway Promenade.** An elm tree-lined path that remembers the historic connection between Broadway on the west side of the Red River and Provencher Boulevard on the east.
12. **A-Channel Building.** The former steam plant building, built in 1947 and converted into a state-of-the-art television studio in 1999.
13. **Railway Boxcar and Passenger Cars.** Now retail and interpretive space.
14. **Manitoba Theatre for Young People Building.** This 28,000-square-foot performance facility was opened in 1999 and features a theatre, classroom studios, and production and wardrobe shops. Beyond its main stage season and touring shows, the company, which was founded in 1982, develops and delivers theatre-in-education programs and a theatre school with over 1,500 students.
15. **Explore Manitoba Centre,** completed in 1993 featuring information and displays highlighting the Province's diversity.
16. **Johnston Terminal Building**
17. One of the many **busker stations** at The Forks furnishing a year-round stage for many talented performers.
18. **The Forks Market,** with its two levels of shops, restaurants, specialty stores and offices.

Steam locomotives at the door of the B & B Building, now the Manitoba Children's Museum, ca. 1950 (Lacombe Collection, No. 9)



Looking east into the busy East Yards, ca. 1914. One of the two stable buildings that is today part of The Forks Market is visible on the right. (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg Railway Yards - CNR 5, N22655)

All aboard!

The Railroad Era

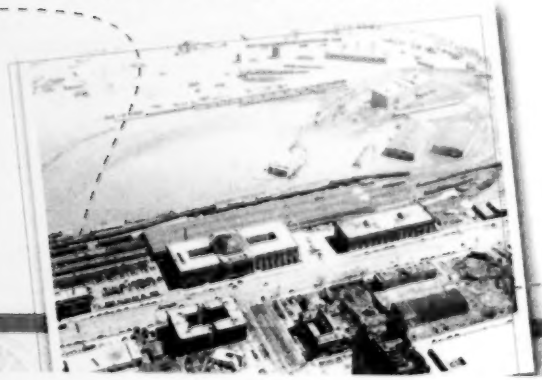
MINI-TOUR TWO

Look across the landscape and marvel at the size of the railway yards that stretch out before you all the way to the riverbank. The kilometres of track are filled with boxcars and engines, constantly moving, joining and separating. You can hear the clanging of cars, the screeching of wheels, metal on metal, the groaning of the massive engines, the hollering of workers in one of many foreign languages heard around the yards.

Winnipeg has become the hub for dozens of these iron rail ventures. From small local rail carriers to the transcontinental giants – their main and branch lines stretching web-like through the farmlands from community to community all across the prairies. The rail cars all around you are an integral part of this activity, taking newly arrived citizens and their belongings west to their new homes, or taking wheat and other produce east to ultimately find their way to the markets of Europe.

But Winnipeg really isn't your home; it's just a stopover. Once you have taken your passenger seat again you will move on, stopping at one of those prairie communities you now call home.

The low, swampy nature of The Forks is perfectly illustrated by this picture of the 1950 flood. (Western Canada Pictorial Index, 1440-43611)



Group of Grand Trunk Pacific Railway workers seated on the turntable of the roundhouse, ca. 1913. (Western Canada Pictorial Index, 482-15461)

Railroad Era Highlights

1877: Arrival of the Countess of Dufferin by boat from St. Paul, Minnesota becoming Canada's first railroad steam engine.

1881-1882: The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was constructed through Winnipeg after being offered money, land and tax breaks by City Council. The station, yards and repair facilities were built on Higgins Avenue at Point Douglas, north of The Forks. The station now houses the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg.

1888: The Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railroad (NP&MR) comes north despite the CPR monopoly and lays track to Winnipeg. The following year its station, yards and ten-stall roundhouse facilities are built at The Forks. In the 1920s the roundhouse was demolished although the connected engine house is now the Manitoba Children's Museum.

1901: The Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) takes over the NP&MR facilities and then, in partnership with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (GTPR), expands the yards, adding more tracks, warehouses and horse stables.

The arrival, by barge, of Canadian Pacific Railway's steam engine, The Countess of Dufferin, 1877 (Archives of Manitoba Transportation-Railway Countess of Dufferin 2 N14)

1911: The Union Station on Main Street (known today as the VIA Rail Station) opened. A joint effort of the GTPR and CNoR, it took three years to build and was designed by New York architects Warren and Wetmore, designers of New York City's Grand Central Station (built 1903-1913).

1920s: The Canadian government took over numerous financially troubled railways, including the GTPR and the CNoR, creating the Canadian National Railway (CNR).

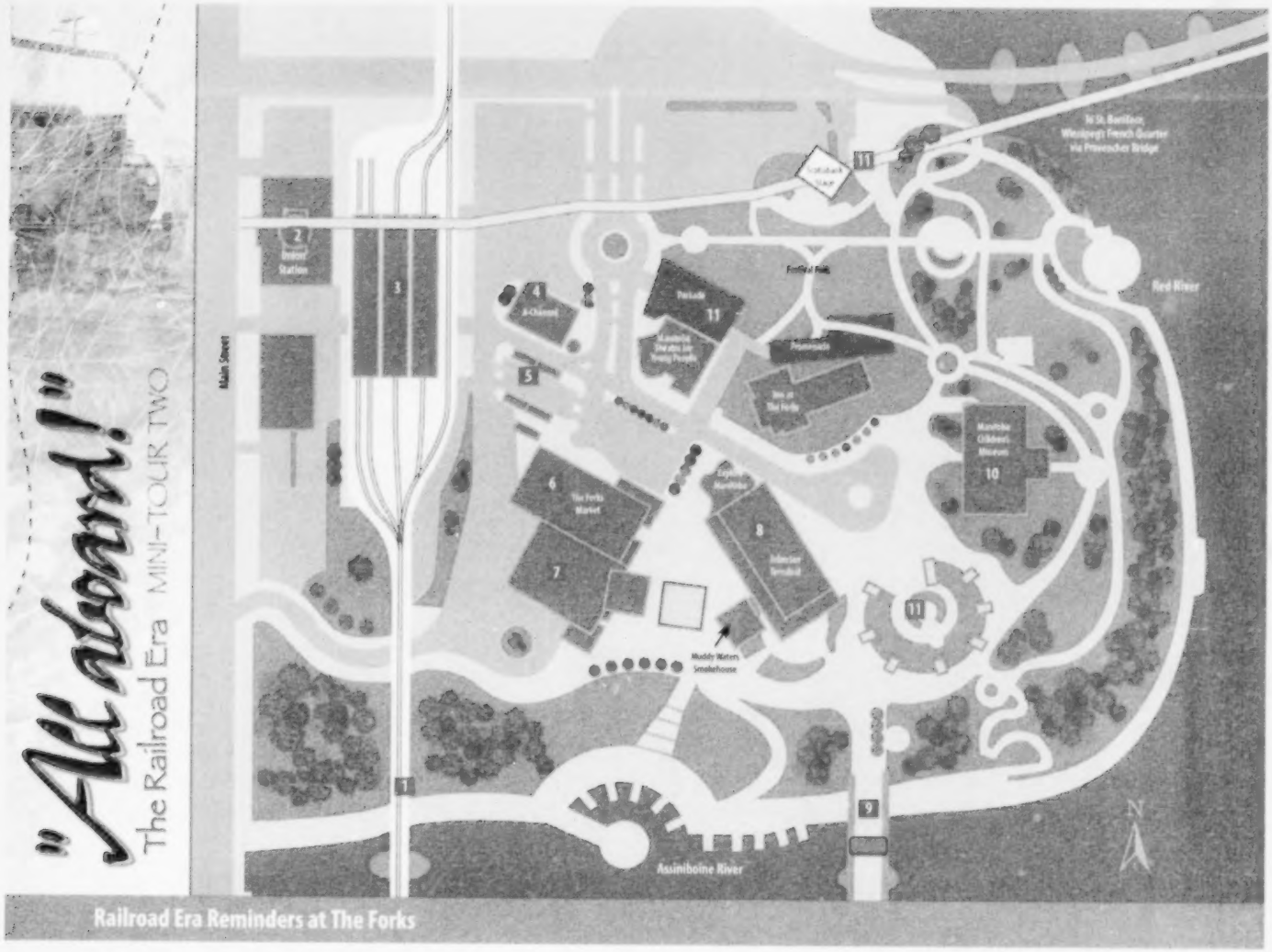
1960s: CNR operated these facilities, known as the East Yards, until a move to more modern headquarters, Symington Yards, in the southeast corner of the city.

1984: The abandoned Winnipeg Transfer Railway line along the Red River (which connected the East Yards and the CPR Yards) was transformed into the scenic Steve Juba Park and later Waterfront Drive (2004), restoring public access to the river.

The Union Station, Main Street, Winnipeg. The East Yards, Broadway and Provencher bridges and St. Boniface are in the background (M. Peterson Collection)

"All aboard!"

The Railroad Era MINI-TOUR TWO



Railroad Era Reminders at The Forks

1. **CNR main line.** This 4.25-metre (14-foot) high embankment marks the western and northern boundaries of The Forks site.
2. **Union Station,** 123 Main Street, now VIA Rail Station, recognized as a National Historic Site of Canada for its architecture.
3. **Winnipeg Rail Museum,** VIA Rail Station, tracks 1 and 2. Collection includes the Countess of Dufferin and many other train-related machinery, etc.
4. **1947 Steam plant,** built by the CNR to provide power to Union Station, the East Yards and the Hotel Fort Garry.
5. **Refurbished railway cars.** Tuscany red CPR car CP1355, built in 1926 as a "Buffet and Parlour Car" and later converted into a typical 1914-1931 era first class passenger car (now retail space). Green coloured "Combine" car built in 1924 but rebuilt by the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway and used to haul both freight and passengers. Fully refurbished 1930s-era caboose (open for public viewing) and two typical wooden boxcars (one for retail space).
6. **CNoR stables** (north section of The Forks Market), built a year before and slightly larger than the GTPR stables, it too was converted into a garage in 1938 with offices on the second floor and was vacated in the 1980s.
7. **GTPR stables** (south section of The Forks Market), built in 1910 featured a second floor hayloft and room for approximately 100 horses. Converted into a garage in the late 1930s, it was in use until the 1980s. The names of aisles and corridors are reminiscent of past uses.
8. **Johnston Terminal Building,** originally the National Cartage Building, constructed 1928-1930 as a cold storage warehouse, used as a warehouse until 1977. A scale model of the Countess of Dufferin can be found on the first floor.
9. **Rail Bridge** with its huge counterweight to raise and lower a section of the deck to allow the passage of large river boats.
10. **Former NP&MR, B&B Building** (originally Boiler and Brake Building, then Bridge and Building Department). Completed in 1889 as part of the roundhouse complex, it is the oldest railway-related structure at The Forks (now the Manitoba Children's Museum, Kinsmen Building).

* 11. A section of **cobblestone** that once graced much of the grounds in the East Yards. The sandstone blocks were also used as ballast in empty grain cars travelling west. (*Note the 3 locations on the map and that the Parkade is above ground)

They came from afar

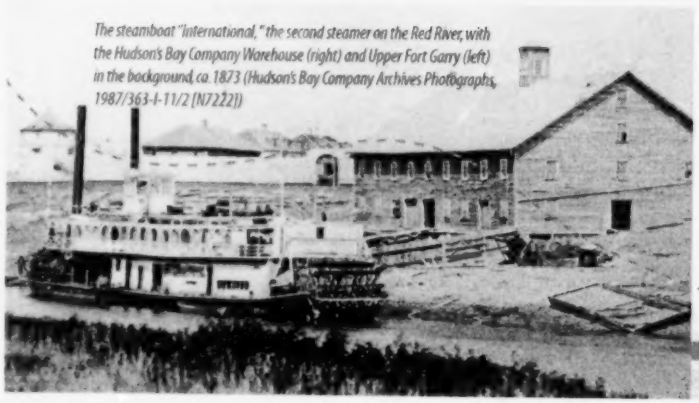
Mennonite Delegation in front of the Dominion Lands Office, 1873. The Lands Office was an important step in the immigration process (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg - Buildings - Federal - Dominion Lands Office - 1 N1608 9)

The Immigration Era

MINI-TOUR THREE

If you are among the later groups of immigrants arriving from Eastern Canada, you are very lucky. You come by train, arriving in Winnipeg after a brief and very scenic journey through your adopted country. The train is fast, efficient, comfortable and safe. The journey west gives you an idea of the sheer size of Canada. Through your window, you catch a glimpse of the land, the climate and the isolation. Or you may have come west through the United States, taking a steamboat north from Minnesota. It is a pleasant enough trip that might include getting grounded on one of the many shallow spots on the Red River.

If you journey west before the era of railroads and steamboats, however, it is not as easy. After planning, saving and organizing for months or even years in your homeland, you load yourself, your family and a few belongings into boats for an unpredictable trip across the ocean. You arrive after what can only be described as a harrowing journey of up to three weeks, involving leaky boats, long hikes through swamps, suspect accommodations, meagre supplies and the introduction of your constant companion, the mosquito. As you survey your final destination, you find that at this point in time Winnipeg is little more than a collection of crude buildings connected by muddy trails.



The steamboat "International," the second steamer on the Red River, with the Hudson's Bay Company Warehouse (right) and Upper Fort Garry (left) in the background, ca. 1873 (Hudson's Bay Company Archives Photographs, 1987/363-I-11/2 (N7222))

Immigrant shacks in the "Flats" just north of the old Broadway Bridge, ca. 1880 (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg - Views, ca. 1880-1 N13783)

Your family and many more like you are placed in short-term government immigration sheds to await departure to your farms further west. There is overcrowding, disease and little food.

The promises made to you in your hometown in Europe by the Canadian government do not seem to ring true. Where is the fertile land? The idyllic life on the farm? You wonder if anyone cares about your plight?

The cover of one of the many pieces of promotional material produced by various government departments to persuade immigrants to settle in Manitoba. (Historical Services, Parks Canada, Western Canada Service [Winnipeg])

Immigrants standing outside of the Immigration Hall, no date. (Historical Services, Parks Canada, Western Canada Service [Winnipeg])

Immigration Era Highlights

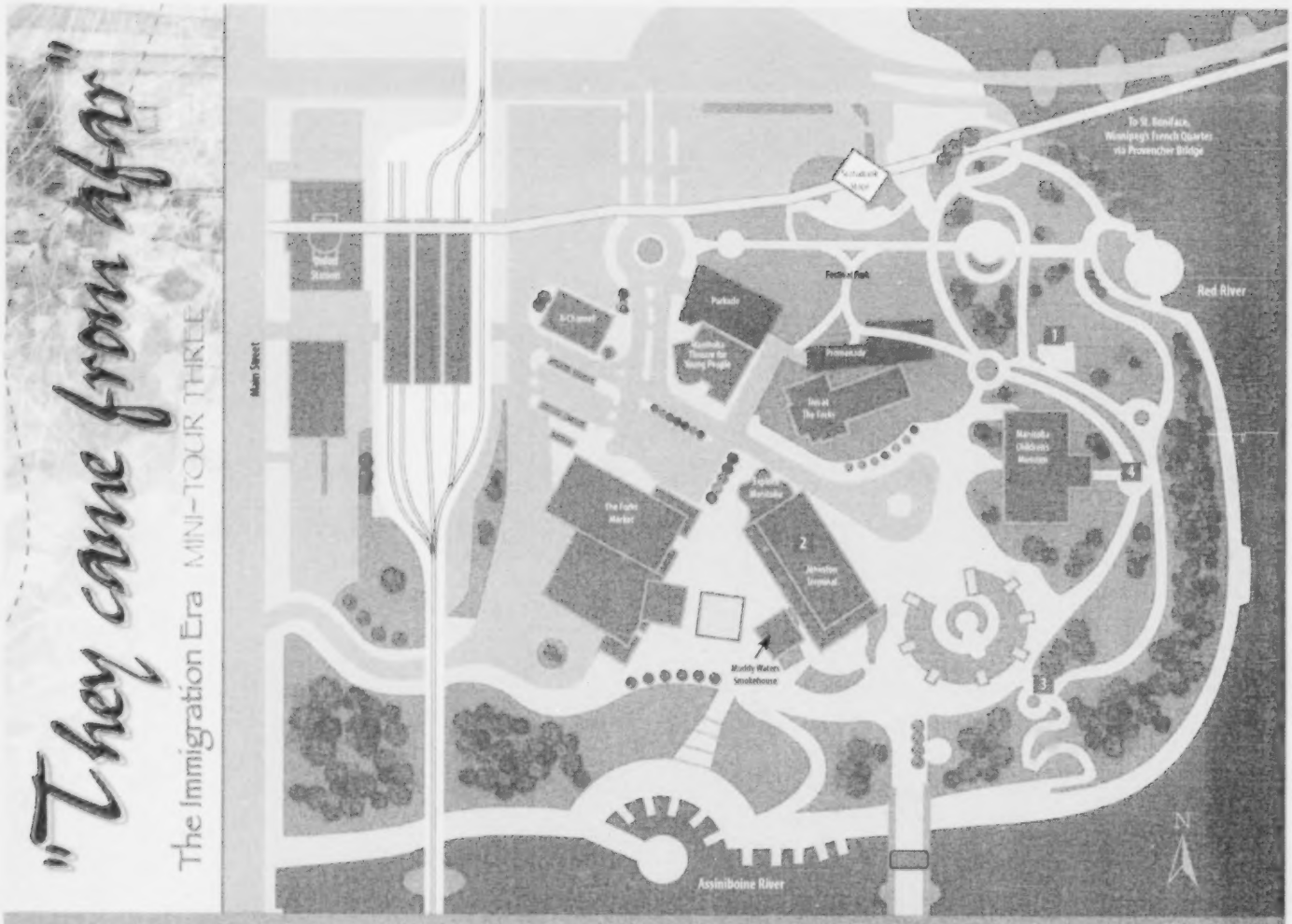
1870: The Canadian government began a concerted effort to attract British, European and American immigrants to the Canadian Prairies to populate the territory and increase agricultural production. Pamphlets and advertisements were circulated and by the mid-point of the decade, the program was bringing men, women and children to Winnipeg.

1872: To administer to the growing numbers of newcomers, the Canadian government built an immigration shed near the mouth of the Assiniboine River to house approximately 25 families in small rooms. One contemporary observer compared these rooms to "pens in a pig stye." The following year, a second shed was completed to hold another 400-500 people. Both were intended for short-term stays of no more than a week. Because of their many inadequacies, they were taken down in 1885.

1870s-1880s: The overcrowding of the immigration sheds led to the establishment of a shantytown. The large area, known as the Flats (around the present-day Scotiabank Stage), was notorious for its poor living conditions and the availability of liquor and prostitutes. The shacks were not removed until the construction of the NP&MR yards in the late 1880s.

"They came from afar"

The Immigration Era MINI-TOUR THREE



Immigration Era Reminders at The Forks

1. **Interpretive plaques** in the Heritage Adventure Playground.
2. **Cyril Genick panel,** ground floor, Johnston Terminal Building. Genick (1857-1925), nicknamed "the Czar of Canada," arrived in Winnipeg in 1896 and was soon hired as an interpreter and in 1898, became a full-time employee (the first Ukrainian in the Canadian public service). He spent the next 16 years helping his fellow Ukrainians feel more comfortable in their new home, travelling west to find and secure their homestead property and updating the Canadian government on settlement developments.
3. **Location of the Federal Immigrant Sheds (1872-1885)**
4. **The Red and Assiniboine Rivers.** Used for transporting people and goods, for irrigating crops and caring for livestock and for recreation, rivers were a vital part of early immigrant life in Western Canada.

Trains like this one in 1927 brought immigrants west by the thousands. Some stayed in Winnipeg, most travelled further to their new homesteads. (Archives of Manitoba, Foote 466, N2066. Photograph by L. B. Foote)

Painting of Upper Fort Garry, date unknown
(The Forks North Portage Partnership)

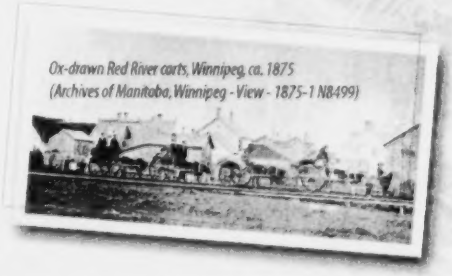
Winter clothing of men at Upper Fort Garry, 1847
(Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 58.24.41)

Beaver hats, bullets & beads

The Fur Trade Era

MINI-TOUR FOUR

The life of a fur trader is not easy. Maybe you are one of the first arrivals from Europe, a clerk brought over by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) to establish one of several large northern posts. Life has few luxuries, and the winters seemed to last forever. Many decades later, when the trade was being pushed further and further inland by rival trading companies from Eastern Canada, you might have been hired on as a voyageur, paddling large canoes west from the Great Lakes and onto the prairies.



Ox-drawn Red River carts, Winnipeg, ca. 1875
(Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg - View - 1875-1 N8499)

Physically demanding, the rigors of the long trips with their extensive portages take a terrible toll on many of your comrades. To escape a similar fate, you might choose to 'settle down' and take charge of one of the hundreds of trading posts and forts located throughout the West, or you might decide to give farming a try and buy land near the Red River Settlement.

But there are also happy times. The pomp and ceremony of trading days, the excitement of the arrival of goods and news from Europe, the smell of fresh-baked bread and the Red River Jig.

The confluence of two major rivers was obviously important to the fur trade and as a place to meet and align with local native bands. Four different fur-trading forts were located within the site known as The Forks today over a 130-year period starting in 1738.

Trading, of course, was not a new activity for First Nations groups; extensive trading between native bands had brought materials from hundreds and thousands of kilometres away for many generations prior to the arrival of Europeans.

Most coveted was the beaver pelt, from which the finest hats were fashioned. But the list of furs and other materials sent to Europe (such as feathers from cranes and swans for use as quills) was lengthy indeed.

Fort Gibraltar II (Fort Garry I) by H. J. Robertson
(Archives of Manitoba, Fort Gibraltar-4 N10611)

Fur Trade Era Highlights

1870: The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was organized, establishing trading posts along Hudson Bay.

1737: French explorer Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye reached the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, naming them both and erroneously giving this geographical junction the name "La Fourche" (The Forks) and establishing Fort Rouge a year later. Fort Rouge would only last a decade.

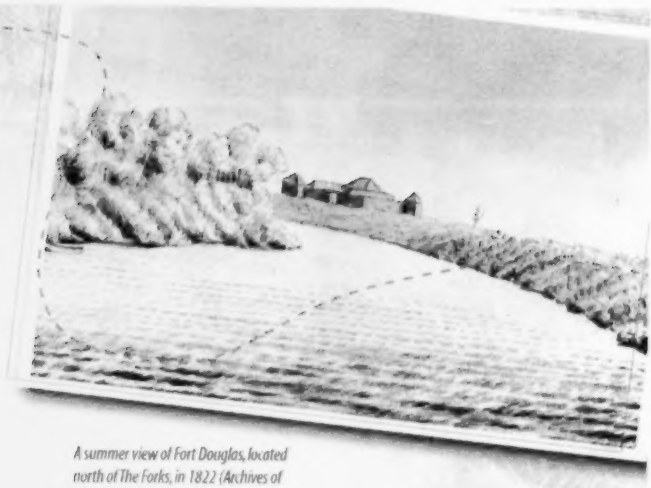
1784: The North West Company (NWC) was organized in Montreal by Scottish merchants employing French-speaking voyageurs. As they set out to establish posts throughout the western plains, it marked the beginning of the often bitter and violent competition between the two fur trading companies that lasted even after their merger in 1821.

Out of the trade came the Métis and the country-born, offspring of native mothers and Francophone and Anglophone fathers, respectively. Distinct and fiercely independent, this new society took its place at the forefront of events that would ultimately shape the future of Western Canada. They were hunters, trappers, guides, interpreters, warriors, freighters, provisioners, farmers and merchants.

1810: NWC built Fort Gibraltar near the site of today's Heritage Adventure Playground, only to have it destroyed by the HBC in 1816. Fort Gibraltar II was built nearby the following year.

1812: Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk and major HBC shareholder, organized the first permanent, agriculture-based settlement west of the Great Lakes. Groups of dispossessed farmers (mostly of Scottish heritage) took up land on the west side of the Red River several miles north of The Forks. Despite early years of hardship, starvation and resentment from local traders, the community, known originally as the Selkirk Settlement, flourished.

Métis Red River cart train on the prairies, ca. 1858 (Archives of Manitoba, Transportation - Red River Cart 45, N22654. Photograph by R.J. Upton. From original in Minnesota Historical Society).



A summer view of Fort Douglas, located north of The Forks, in 1822 (Archives of Manitoba, Fort Douglas 2 N10106)

1813: HBC built Fort Douglas approximately 2.5 kilometres north of The Forks. It was burnt to the ground by a group of NWC employees and allied Métis in 1815.

1813-14: Farms were settled according to an initial survey comprised of long, narrow plots of land, most measuring only four chains (264 feet, 80.5 metres) wide and fronting on the Red River. Ontario observers derisively referred to these lots as "lanes of farming."

1821: After the merger of the two companies the HBC decided to use Fort Gibraltar II as its new headquarters, renaming it Fort Garry after a company official who orchestrated the merger. It would become part of the HBC Experimental Farm in the 1830s and was finally demolished sometime after the major flood of 1852.

The merger caused the loss of employment for many, with some estimates as high as two-thirds of the entire labour force. Combined with the loss of the buffalo, many in the area chose to take up farming and purchased land on both sides of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers north and west of The Forks. Here, families employed the river-lot style of farming.

1835: The Forks became the administrative centre for the western fur trade and as such, the HBC chose to construct a fine new fort, named Upper Fort Garry complete with five-metre high stone walls. Additions were made in 1852. Except for the north gate, the fort was demolished in the 1880s to allow for the straightening of Main Street.

"Beaver hats, bullets & beads"

The Fur Trade Era MINI-TOUR FOUR

Fur Trade Era Reminders at The Forks

1. The probable location of **Fort Rouge at South Point,** the first fur trade post located at The Forks.
2. **Plaque describing Fort Rouge**
3. **Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque honouring La Vérendrye**
4. **Plaque describing Fort Gibraltar I (1810-1816)**
5. **Location of the HBC Flour and Grist Mill Complex (1874-1907)**
6. **Fort Gibraltar II (1817-1821)**
7. **Experimental Farm Stables**
8. **Upper Fort Garry (North Gate)**

A view of Upper Fort Garry from across the river, (Archives of Manitoba, Fort Garry 37/1 N16288)

The earliest inhabitants

Aboriginal peoples were hired to work in many aspects of the fur trade, including freighting trade goods and furs. (Historical Services, Parks Canada, Western Canada Service Centre [Winnipeg])

The Aboriginal Peoples Era

MINI-TOUR FIVE

There is evidence in the form of campsites that small groups of First Nations hunters and gatherers came to The Forks 6000 years ago. These groups, following game and seeking more sheltered locations in the winter, used the area sporadically for many generations.

Sketch of a traditional Aboriginal camp (Historical Services, Parks Canada, Western Canada Service Centre [Winnipeg])

Beginning about 3000 years ago the area was used for longer, more extended periods of camping. It was an important stop in the seasonally based life of the area's population. Hunting, fishing and collecting berries and other foodstuffs were important activities taking place at The Forks. Because groups chose to camp in the area, activities such as clothes making, the fashioning of tools and weapons, and game playing also occurred.

With its wealth of food and its important location at the junction of two major rivers, The Forks was also the site of vital trading and meeting activities for the three distinct groups – Cree from the north and west, Anishinabe (Ojibway) from the east and Nakota (Assiniboin) and Mandan from the south – that used the area extensively.

You could be part of a small family band, camping a short distance from the river and helping to catch some of the many species of fish found in the muddy waters. Or you may be gathering berries from the surrounding countryside or even setting traps for the plentiful wildlife, especially during the summer when migrating waterfowl inhabited the marshy areas along the rivers.

Native Era Highlights

Careful monitoring of **excavations** during The Forks' redevelopment led to the discovery of 6000 year-old campsites near The Forks Market Building (at a depth of 6 metres or 20 feet) and 3000 year-old sites near the Johnston Terminal Building (at 3 metres or 10 feet).

Artifacts unearthed from older sites (deeper in the ground) include catfish bones and stone flakes created while tools were being manufactured. From more recent sites have come the bones of fish, elk, bison and deer, clay pottery, and harpoon/spear/arrow points made from material brought from as far away as present-day Texas.

Native encampment near The Forks, 1866 (Archives of Manitoba, Indians 4, N10985)

The **discovery** of a hoe made from a bison shoulder blade suggests that some form of farming was also carried on at The Forks.

First Nations oral history describes a Peace Meeting that occurred at The Forks approximately 500 years ago, bringing together large numbers of people to talk and trade.

First Nations people use of the area changed dramatically after the arrival of Europeans and even more so during the railway era, when The Forks was almost completely closed to public access.

Treaty payments continue to this day at the site.

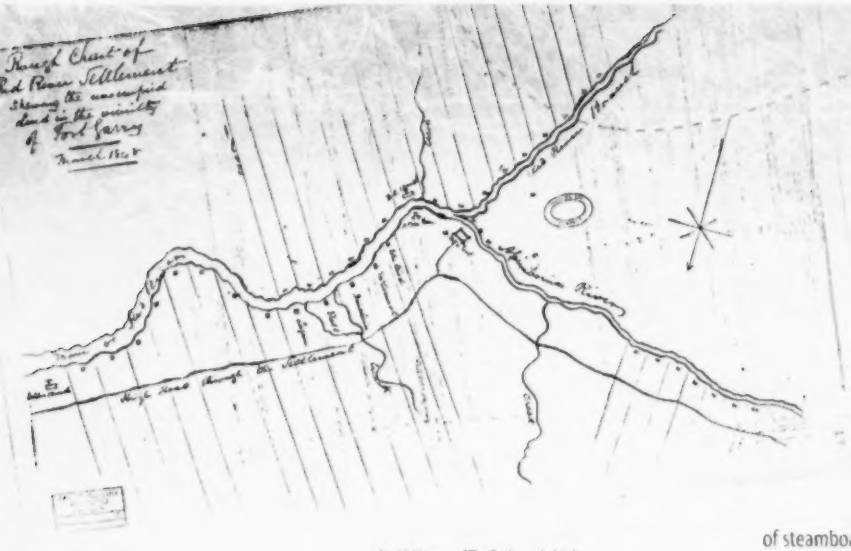
Artist Peter Rindisbacher painted this group of Saulteaux travelling in the winter, ca. 1825. (Archives of Manitoba, Red River Settlement-14 N7553)

"The earliest inhabitants"

The Aboriginal Peoples Era MINI-TOUR TIME

Aboriginal Peoples Reminders at The Forks

1. **South Point,** the probable location of Fort Rouge, will be utilized in the future to highlight Aboriginal peoples use of the area.
2. **"Balance of the Spirit Within"** created by Natalie Rostad Desjarlais as a modern tribute to the Aboriginal community.
3. **Gambling or gaming sticks.** Used in the play of guessing games, these popular items were found in most Canadian Aboriginal societies. Each stick had specific markings that determined its name and value and from ten to over 100 sticks could be used during play.
4. **Oodena Celebration Circle,** a tribute to the Aboriginal people based on the stories and sacred places of the people that have visited the area for at least 6000 years.
5. **Buffalo Hunt Sculpture,** overlooking the Amphitheatre.
6. **Aboriginal Node** ("I was Free Before, in Spaces to the Stars") describing the seasonal migration and activities of native groups.



An 1848 map of The Forks and vicinity. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Maps and Plans G.1/320)

Water, water, everywhere!

The Rivers

MINI-TOUR SIX

The Assiniboine River begins a 960-kilometre journey west from Saskatchewan to The Forks, meandering as it goes. The larger Red River begins in North Dakota, U.S.A. and empties into Lake Winnipeg to the north, a distance of approximately 800 kilometres and a drop in elevation of 60 metres from the international border to Lake Winnipeg.

These two rivers have always been a main source of transportation – canoes and York boats filled with trade goods have plied the muddy waters. They have also provided food for humans and the timber on their banks was used for fuel, shelter, tools and weapons.

As the area's population increased and technology advanced, the rivers filled with all types of watercraft leading to the introduction of steamboats in the late 1850s. Over the next half-century, these "lumbering old pinebaskets" could be seen and heard slowly winding their way along the rivers, some being extremely well appointed and luxurious.

In the winter, the rivers saw heavy use for both transportation and recreation. Once the ice broke, ferries were an important method of crossing and several ran between The Forks and St. Boniface to the east and The Forks and South Point. Ferries were used to transport animals, vehicles, people and goods from one bank to the other. Ultimately they were replaced by bridges, first using early pontoon structures and later permanent steel and concrete spans.

Looking west across the Red River into Winnipeg, 1912. The many bridges, rail yards, and Union Station are all part of The Forks site. (Archives of Manitoba, N8374)

Highlights of The Rivers

Built in 1908 as the fourth cathedral on the site, the St. Boniface Roman Catholic Cathedral was destroyed by a disastrous fire in 1968 (University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg Tribune Collection PC 18/S774/18-4922-021). The stone walls remained intact and a new building has been constructed within these walls.

1826: Due to the region's flat topography and poor drainage, major flooding has periodically occurred in the Red River valley. Since records were kept, the flood of 1826 was the most severe. The water rose over 3 metres (9 feet) in one day and at its height was over 9 metres (30 feet) above normal summer levels. Standing at Portage and Main today, the water would have been over a metre (4 feet) high.

1859: The first steamboat arrived at The Forks, coming from the United States. It was named the Anson Northup in honour of its first captain. Steamboat travel waned in the 1860s but experienced a rapid increase in the 1870s until the arrival of the railroads in the 1880s. The last Red River steamboat trip occurred in 1909, the final journey on the Assiniboine in 1913.

1882: Bridges, first temporary and floating on pontoons, then permanent steel types, have been a part of the history of The Forks since the construction of the Broadway Bridge in 1882.

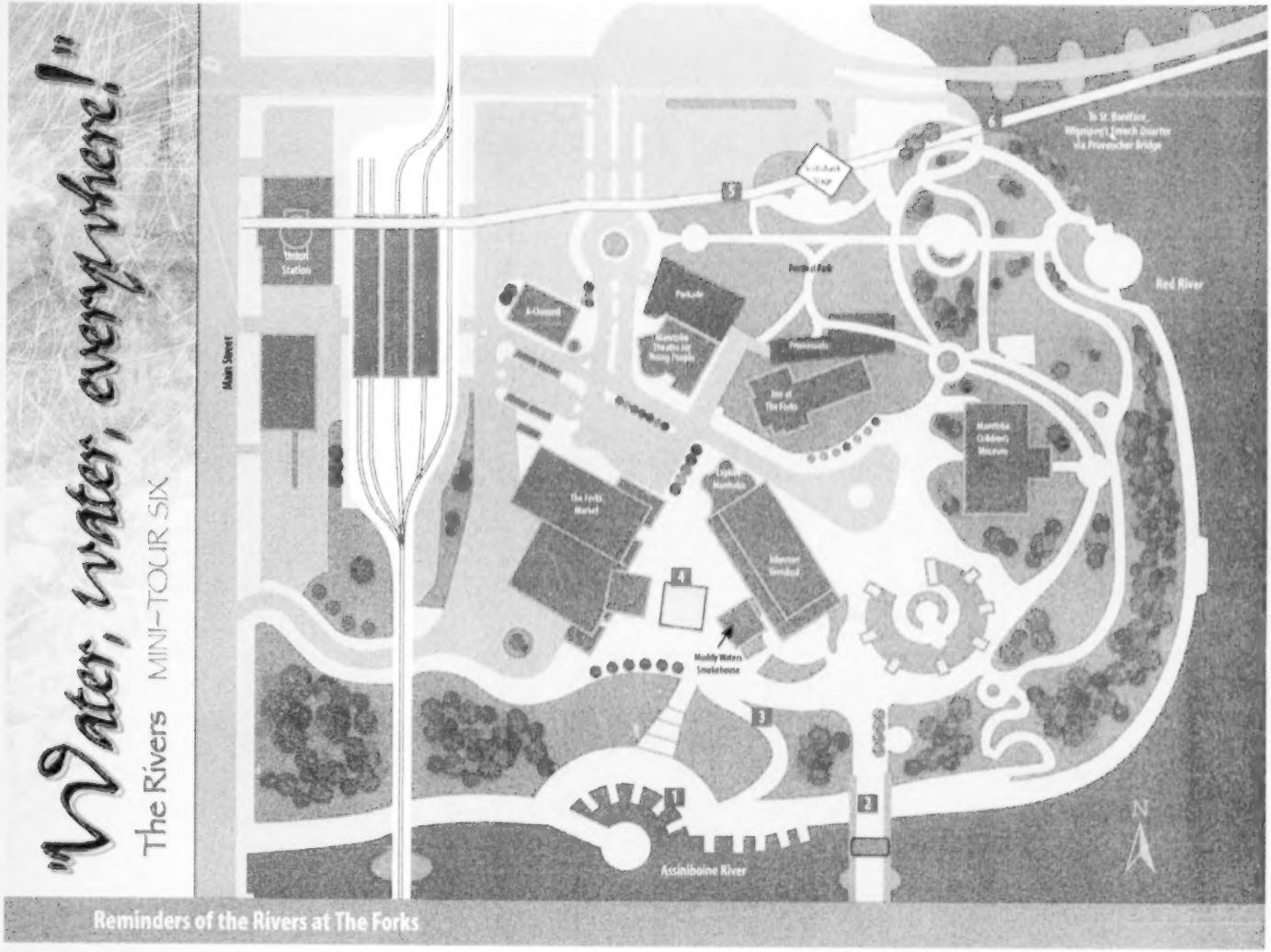
Flood data: Note that Winnipeg's famous downtown intersection, Portage and Main, is approximately 760.0' above sea level and normal summer water level for the Red River is 734.6'. The post-1966 figures are lower mainly due to the construction of the Winnipeg Floodway (1962-68), a 40-kilometre diversion channel taking excess water from the Red River around the City of Winnipeg.

Year	Severity (Feet above sea level)
1826	764.1'
1852	762.3'
1861	760.4'
1948	750.7'
1950	757.9'
1966	753.9'
1979	746.9'
1996	747.0'
1997	752.1'

An early photograph looking eastward across the Red River into St. Boniface, ca. 1858 (Archives of Manitoba, Hime Collection-6 N10833. Photograph by H. L. Hime). Granted to the Roman Catholic Church by Hudson's Bay Company shareholder Lord Selkirk in 1818, St. Boniface grew from a small, agricultural settlement into a modern city – the largest francophone community west of Quebec and the centre of French culture in Western Canada. The Roman Catholic Cathedral is seen on the left, the Grey Nuns' Convent, now the St. Boniface Museum, on the right.

"Water, water, everywhere!"

The Rivers MINI-TOUR SIX



Reminders of the Rivers at The Forks

1. **The Forks Historic Port,** former site of the Hudson's Bay Company warehouse, dock and even a Winnipeg dump.
2. **Former railway bridge.** It was designed with a large counterweight to allow for the raising of the bridge deck permitting a large steamboat to pass underneath (although this function was never needed).
3. **Flood levels** for major occurrences along the Wall Through Time.
4. **Flood markers** on the northwest pillar of The Forks Plaza, including the 1997 "Flood of the Century" marker.
5. **Provencher Bridge and Esplanade Riel**
6. **Broadway Promenade,** renewing the historic connection between Winnipeg and St. Boniface via Broadway and Provencher Boulevard. This connection was severed by the construction of Union Station on Main Street in 1911. Elm trees planted along the Promenade heighten this connection.

Hockey on the river
(The Forks North Portage Partnership)

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